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This study was undertaken to determine whether an oral-aural approach to remedial composition instruction for college students would be superior to the traditional grammar and rhetoric approach. For one semester, four classes of remedial writing at Jefferson College in Missouri served as experimental groups in which ideas and sound were stressed while grammar and concepts of correctness were eliminated. Three classes served as control groups in which traditional teaching methods were used. Experimental classroom sessions were divided into two parts: a thought stimulation period, exposing students to such motivational aids as films, slides, prints, cartoons, or recordings; and a writing session, occasionally preceded by a discussion period. Pre- and post-test composition samples of the experimental and control groups plus the results of the Cooperative English Test provided evaluation data. Results indicated that students taught by the experimental method learned to write as well as those taught by the traditional grammar method. (A list of classroom aids, a suggested semester course outline, and evaluations of composition samples are appended.) (JM)

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AN ORAL-AUDIO-VISUAL APPROACH TO REMEDIAL WRITING

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PREFACE

Improvement of remedial writing instruction is the basic aim of this study. The teachers who participated in the program, therefore, have in the fullest sense made it possible. We wish to thank the following members of the Jefferson College Department of English for their cooperation: Karen A. Butery, who taught in the experimental program; Doris E. Atzeff, Robert M. Dennison and Thomas J. Ganey for teaching the control group.

Invaluable aid with the testing procedure and statistical analysis has been rendered by Sheldon L. Siegel, Guidance Counselor of Jefferson College. The evaluation of the writing samples was supervised by William C. Hamlin, Professor of English, University of Missouri at St. Louis. Alan L. Slay, Assistant Professor of English, Florissant Valley Community College, generously shared his experience concerning tape recorder theme correction.

The project was begun with the encouragement and help of Harold D. McAninch, now Vice-President for Instruction, Jackson Community College. Paul D. Moore, Dean of Arts and Sciences, Jefferson College, has continued the support of the project and helped us see it to completion.

George E. Montag
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John O. Rosenbalm

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INTRODUCTION

Is a knowledge of grammar a necessary prerequisite to writing competence? This questioning of the classic grammar to rhetoric approach to language instruction underlies this entire study. The hypothesis on which the study is based is that writing proficiency can be attained without the acquisition of grammatical knowledge. Several observations led us to this supposition.

Men acquire oral-audio competency with their language, complete with most of the structural complexities without formal study of the structure. The first grade child (barring severe handicap) arrives with the ability to communicate in his language, to speak to his teacher and to comprehend the spoken word directed to him. It seems incongruous to approach writing, the substitute for speech, from a point of view which seems to negate this previous acquisition of language skill; to approach the writing process as if the learner possessed no previous linguistic knowledge. If he can learn to speak and acquire aural comprehensive ability without the study of grammar, why can he not learn to write in a similar manner? Why can he not learn to transfer his oral-aural ability concerning his language to the written word, circumventing the study of grammar? The method proposed in this project attempts to do just this, not with six-year olds, but with college freshmen who have added twelve additional years to their language experience.

The twelve years of schooling, including repeated exposures to grammatical study, seem to do little to improve the writing performance of many of the students. Of the 718 freshmen at Jefferson College in September, 1968, 153 - about 21% - were placed in remedial writing classes.* The question can be raised also as to whether there is any relationship between grammar instruction and the composition of those who do become more proficient. Do these students learn to write "because of," or "in spite of" instruction in grammar? While our study concentrates on the remedial program, most of the problems involved are

---

* Students who score below the 35th percentile on the Missouri College English Test and the School and College Ability Test and have grades of "C" or lower in high school English courses. Comparison of 1967 and 1968 test scores with other Missouri colleges show the performance of Jefferson College students to be typical of the entire group. See Tables 1 and 2.

prevalent to a lesser degree in all college composition classes. Because of the failure of the students to acquire proficiency from the classical approach to which most have been previously exposed, we can see no reason to repeat the approach in college.

Because of their repeated failure to do well in English, most remedial students approach the college course with a resigned attitude of "here I go again" at best, and which might degenerate to one of distaste and indifference if not overt hostility to the study at worst.

In an attempt to overcome the defeatist outlook toward the discipline, and particularly toward writing, this method is designed to approach the subject in a way completely different from that most students have experienced in their previous work. In addition to the oral-aural, sans-grammar methodology, we have employed what has been termed the "irreverent attitude" toward language. The guiding principle of correctness is appropriateness to occasion. We attempt to shift some of the blame for the students' linguistic difficulties onto the language itself. Matters of convention, phonetic subtleties, illogical grammatical rules and their legislators we consider fair game for good-natured attack. In short we do everything we can think of to make this experience with language an enjoyable one. And if we fall short of fun at times, we earnestly hope we don't add a layer of misery and further discouragement.

Discouragement in composition classes is not limited to the student. Most teachers must question, some periodically and some continuously, the effectiveness of the grammar to rhetoric method. To many of us the carry-over seems meager. Too often we have failed to see any effect carried from grammar instruction onto the blank page which the student struggles to fill with meaningful thought. Intuitively at least, some of us have felt that the classic method "did not work," or that "there must be a better way."

And we have experience with those cases in which little correlation between grammar and rhetoric is manifest. There are students who can recite rules, fill in workbook blanks but cannot compose a readable paragraph. And the converse situation exists: the writer who pours forth a stream of thought, with a diversified vocabularly, most of which is misspelled, overly punctuated or not punctuated at all. Observation of these cases leads one to question whether all students learn rhetoric <u>and</u> grammar, rather than rhetoric <u>because of</u> grammar.

This, then, is the purpose of this study: to test the grammar to rhetoric tradition. If students do in fact learn grammar and rhetoric, and since rhetorical proficiency is the desired end of the composition course, then there should be an avenue to written rhetoric independent of grammar. The avenue sought in this project is one from the students' oral-aural competence to written communication.

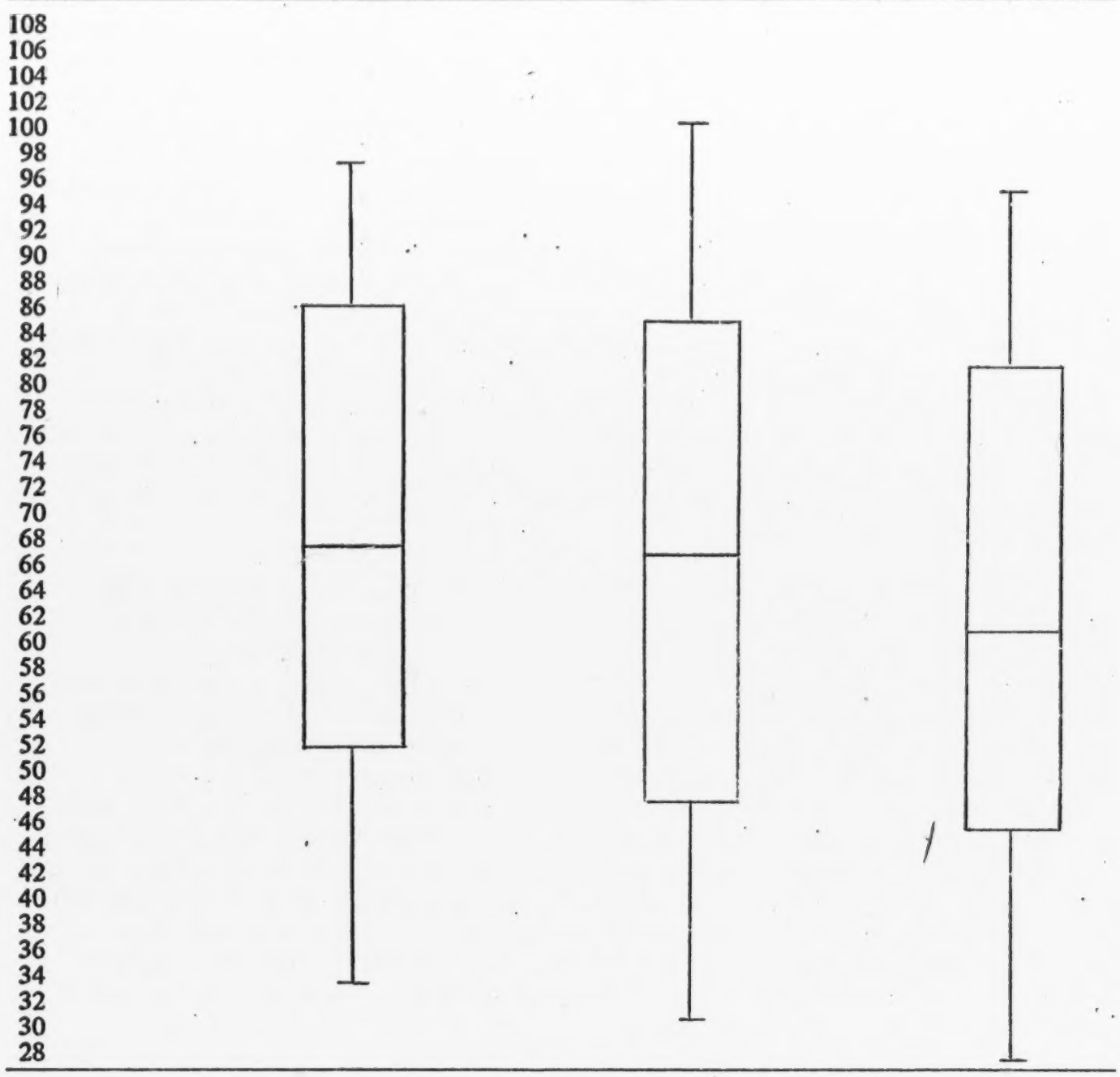
TABLE 1
RAW SCORES COMPARING
THE MEDIAN (50th Percentile) ACHIEVED
BY ENTERING FRESHMEN AT
JEFFERSON COLLEGE AND OTHER DESIGNATED INSTITUTIONS
1968 FALL SESSION

MISSOURI COLLEGE ENGLISH TEST	
	Raw Scores
Jefferson College	46-47
Missouri Public Junior Colleges	44-45
Missouri State Colleges	52-53

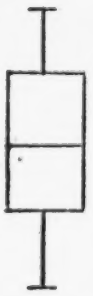
SCAT (SCHOOL & COLLEGE ABILITY TEST)	
Jefferson College	59-60
Missouri Public Junior Colleges	58-59
Missouri State Colleges	65-66

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTIONS* OF SCHOOL AND COLLEGE ABILITY TEST SCORES OF STUDENTS ATTENDING JEFFERSON COLLEGE AND OTHER MISSOURI PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, 1967 WINTER AND SUMMER SESSIONS



LEGEND:



– 98th percentile
– 86th percentile
– 50th percentile
– 16th percentile
– 2nd percentile

* Based on total raw score

RELATED RESEARCH

Research has been done in some areas with which this project concerns itself. A program initiated at the Burris Laboratory School of Ball State University, under the direction of Anthony Tovatt, stressed the Oral-Aural-Visual approach to teaching composition (8). Tovatt's experimental class had twenty-nine students whose competence in written English ranged from "poor to excellent." Tovatt emphasized getting the students to listen to themselves, using tape recorders and small group discussions. In addition, he used projectors to suggest possible different arrangements of what the students had said and recorded. Although Tovatt reported that he could offer no firm conclusions about his project, he did indicate that "many [students] changed their ideas about writing from negative toward positive" and that "the methods used seemed to be expecially beneficial to students with poor verbal ability." Tovatt also indicated that "although a distinct body of published research on teaching English does exist, much of it is not directly related to the writing process beyond teaching certain language concepts as these relate to structuring sentences."

In addition to using tape recorders as a means for getting the students to listen to what they say, Bruce Hawkinson, an Instructor of English at Wisconsin State College and Institute of Technology, has used tape recorders to grade his students' compositions (1). Hawkinson pointed out that tape grading of completed themes was superior because the instructor "can verbalize in one minute about six times as much as he can write in the same time." Hawkinson also pointed out that "tape grading [is] superior to conventional grading because it [is] more positive and . . . more personal." To support the success of this method, Hawkinson reported that at the end of the first semester of this project, "66 percent of the tape-graded students had raised their grades, compared to 13 percent of the control group which received identical instruction but had their papers graded in the conventional 'red pencil' fashion."

In fact, many college English departments have begun to use tape recorders to grade student themes, and each of these departments is reporting initial success. Dr. Joseph J. Irwin, chairman of the English department at Albion College in Albion, Michigan, reports that his instructors have begun to use tape recorders in making comments on student compositions (3). Irwin feels that the instructor

is able to do a much more complete job by using the recorder. Although Irwin reported initial resistance by the students, he now feels sure that they favor the new system and find it more helpful than the traditional flurry of red ink. A similar experiment in grading student themes by tape was initiated at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. Their project was financed by the ESSO Educational Foundation (2). Several of the conclusions reached through this study are revealing and support the basis for part of this research project. The investigators at Bard College concluded that the students were benefiting from the project, that the students were better able to detect errors with their ears rather than with their eyes, and that the machines used actually created more human contact rather than destroying it. Actually the idea of tape recorder grading of themes is gaining some acceptance over the country. From personal contacts, the investigators know that this process has been tried or is being tried at Florissant Valley Community College in St. Louis and Tarrant County Junior College in Fort Worth.

A study of fifth and sixth grade children by Syra Elizabeth Nikoloff pointed out the advantages of stressing aspects of composition such as organization, ideas, and originality rather than those traditional aspects of composition such as spelling, neatness, and mechanical conventions (5). Nikoloff made a study of ten random students from classes whose teachers stressed the traditional conventions and ten random students whose teachers stressed organization, originality, and ideas. She classed the first group of teachers as "high standard" teachers; the second, as "low standard" teachers. She reported that "students of 'low standard' teachers wrote more words, had more ideas, had more rare ideas, and possessed slightly higher overall qualities than students of 'high standard' teachers. The former group [those of 'low standard' teachers] likewise made fewer errors in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation."

The stressing of organization and ideas in composition is not confined to students in elementary schools, however. The Indiana University English Curriculum Study Center (7) has proposed English curriculum which would let the student "discover for himself, without rules or memorization, how [his] language works." The Study Center further asserts: "let him [the student] write on his world--on subjects he understands and knows something about. Let him read material which has meaning for him." This approach is significantly similar to the approach used in this project.

Preliminary reports from the Study Center indicate that their proposed objectives are meeting with considerable success.

Much of the research cited above and the whole thrust of this proposal has been aimed at helping the student to enjoy and comprehend what had been for him a dull and often unattainable target. By stressing ideas and sound and by eliminating grammar and concepts of correctness, this project has sought to eliminate frustration from the study of writing. In his composition handbook, Writing with a Purpose, James M. McCrimmon accurately states the problem of our and other investigations into the subject of writing (4):

> A student whose main thought is to get his spelling, punctuation, and grammatical forms "correct" is in no condition to communicate. For him, writing will be a frustrating exercise, to be done only under compulsion and to be avoided whenever the compulsion is removed.

METHODS

Group Selection

The remedial writing course for the Fall 1968 semester was divided into seven class sections. In four of the sections the experimental approach was used; the other three served as the control group and employed the traditional instruction in grammar. Seven teachers were used for the seven sections.

The students were placed into the various sections on the same basis with which they schedule any other class, i.e., preference for time of day, availability of time in their overall schedule. The sizes of the classes were determined by the demand for the particular class period. See Table 3.

Classroom Procedure

Because of his deficiencies regarding language, the remedial student is likely to lack the fund of information and wider range of interests found in the more accomplished students. This void of information compounds his writing difficulties due to the basic problem that on many topics he has little or nothing to say.

In this procedure the teacher never assumes that the members of the class possess a background of information on any topic. Each writing assignment begins with an attempt to provide the student with some information which he is then encouraged to expand. With some bit of definite matter recently presented to him, the novice writer is less likely to stare blankly at the paper and "fail" again in composition because he has nothing to say.

In addition to providing content for the student essays, with each assignment the teacher attempts to develop a greater rhetorical proficiency. This end is not unlike that striven for in the traditional approach; only the method is different.

Classroom Aids*

The investigators have compiled a collection of visual and auditory aids consisting of movies, recordings, slides and cartoons.

Films

We begin the course by showing the class a film, the first chapter of a melodramatic matinee serial. We feel this first session to be crucial, with an opportunity, not to occur again, to overcome the emotional blocks discussed earlier.

We say little to the class except to direct them to watch the showing of the film. After a few minutes of observing the outlandish adventures of a cowboy hero or a rocket man in a science fiction thriller, we believe the student gets the idea that this class is like none other in English he has had before.

As the chapter of the serial ends, the hero is inevitably on the brink of destruction. The teacher then explains the nature of the film to his students. He informs them that the hero seemingly destroyed before their eyes must return for fourteen more episodes. The students are then told to write two or three paragraphs explaining how the hero escaped from obvious destruction.

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* See Appendix I for a complete list of classroom aids compiled for the course. The Course Outline, Appendix II, also gives some indication of how the aids are used.

No student was found to be at a loss for "something to say." They all were able to write something - to continue the narrative which they had just seen. The melodramatic motion picture cannot possibly be taken seriously; the element of "fun" is obvious. We have found this light-hearted spirit carries over into the writing exercise. They leave the classroom with a different concept of an English composition class than when they entered. While this first class novelty cannot be maintained throughout the course, the attempt is continuously made to retain the freshness and to ban the gloom.

We used two additional films during the course, each of about ten to fifteen minutes duration for the purpose of thought stimulus.

Recordings

An example of the recordings is the auto race track sounds we use to stimulate descriptive writings. We play for the class a series of motor and crowd sounds recorded at a race course: the whining approach and departure of the cars as they pass a point on a straightaway; the "gearing-down" and tire-squealing at a curve; the "missing" and smooth-running motor at a pit stop. The student is directed then to write a description of the proceedings to which he has been listening.

Description and narration exercise can also be stimulated with music. We have used music of the bull ring, parade marches, tone poems and avant-garde selections with success. Combinations of musical selections, or music having similar thematic strains as found in other types of aids can be used for developing comparison and contrast essays.

Slides

Slides of paintings can be used to aid teaching of any of the rhetorical patterns. A painting of a lonely isolated house can lead to an exercise of the type of people that might inhabit such a dwelling. Pictures of people are conducive to character studies. We have used paintings containing large numbers of people to develop classification and division essays. Impressionistic and abstract work can be used to stimulate development of opinion and analysis.

Cartoons

Cartoons offer a wide range of uses. They can be used for the "what happens next" type of exercise. But we find them very useful in helping teach the logical development of an idea, and in discussion of emotionally charged controversial issues. The successful cartoon penetrates immediately to the heart of an issue (we recently used some involving gun control proposals) thereby inducing the student to take a stand, and then in his writing to support it. We find them additionally useful because they usually include an element of humor which adds another dimension to the enjoyment.

Readings

We gradually lead our students to the reader adopted for the course. About the third or fourth week the student is given a brief reading assignment. We also utilize some of the prints and cartoons in the book as a supplement to the other aids. About the sixth or seventh week longer assignments are made in the readings. During the last three weeks of the course the readings are used exclusively as points of departure for composition. The readings consist of essays, short stories and poems.

Revision of Aids

If the aids are to be effective it is necessary for each instructor to assemble those which he feels he can employ to greatest advantage. The choice of materials is practically unlimited. The determining factor in the choice of materials is for the teacher to use what he is most familiar with, and therefore can use facilely and knowingly.

The investigators found that an aid which worked well for one sometimes "bombed" for another. The failure may have been due to the make-up of the particular class, but more often we attributed the lack of success to the unsuitability of the aid to the teacher's ability to use it effectively.

Not only can the aids be considered as an extension of the individuality of the teacher, but each instructor can expect to modify his aids constantly. If the topics for the student writing are to continue to be relevant for class after class, the need for continual revision is obvious. Also, no two classes are exactly alike. Success of this approach depends a great deal upon the teacher's tuning in on the class reaction, detecting directions of interest and being willing to follow where these lead.

If this approach seems overly pragmatic, we can only reply that it is no more so than any true communicative process in which two parties must arbitrarily agree upon a point of departure. This method demands at least as much communication process on the part of the teacher as it does from the student. Not only is the student expected to express his thought, make it clear, back-up his assertions; the instructor is also required to avoid lecturing dicta, to justify his material, to convince. In short he is made to communicate as he in turn asks his students to communicate.

Classroom Correction of Writing

An essential feature of this method is the circulation of the teacher among the students while they are writing. This "over-the-shoulder" revision is based entirely on language sound and language behavior. Spelling errors, when possible, are treated phonetically; the appearance of common words, i.e., "that doesn't look right," is utilized whenever possible. Finally recourse is to the dictionary. Reference to the "rules" is avoided.

Other errors are likewise treated verbally. The student is asked to read his twisted sentence to the teacher; the student is urged to "listen" to his writing, or to "write with his ears." We find in the majority of cases he is able to detect a fault; often he is able to correct the defect with no additional instruction other than calling the blunder to his auditory attention.

Slang and "erroneous" forms are treated as breaches of etiquette rather than linguistic faults. The student will not be convinced that expressions such as "drag," "hisself," and "he don't" are language errors because he has these in his language and has communicated regularly using them. But he will accept the truth of the matter, which is that "race down the road," "himself," and "he doesn't" are more acceptable among some groups of people with whom he may have to communicate at some time.

In this classroom writing instruction, as in all other phases of the approach, we avoid any smug references to standards of "correctness," any insinuation that the language of the student is necessarily inferior to any other. We try to be truthful about the nature of language and its use in communication.

Tape Recorder Grading of Themes

A series of themes are required of each student much like those in most composition classes. The topics for the themes are generated by the aid and discussion process described for the classroom exercises. These themes may be written either in class or as out of class assignments, or as a combination of these according to the instructor's discretion. In any case, for these themes the teacher usually withholds his criticism and aid during the composition process.

The student submits his theme in an envelope together with a four-inch reel of recording tape. The teacher records his criticism of each paper on each student's tape. Equipment for those students who do not own a tape recorder is available for their use in the library and in the language laboratory.

The decision to utilize tape recorder grading is primarily an attempt to extend the oral-audio approach used in the classroom. The same process of verbalizing the language difficulties to the student in person can be used on these papers. The instructor can say to the student, "Listen to this," and then proceed to bombard his ears with his own writing. This can then be followed with a corrective suggestion which "sounds better."

We also find we can continue the encouragement and the exhortation which the remedial student needs so very much. With his paper and his tape we can do this individually, in private, thereby providing each student with a close substitute for a series of private conferences. The reading of each paper becomes a conversation with the author.

The quantity and variety of commentary that is possible with the reel of magnetic tape is impossible to duplicate with the red penciled marginal notes. We also think that the students listen to our comments to an extent that they seldom read the red marks in the margin. We encourage them to write the comments in the margin as they hear them, thereby introducing another step into the critical process. The motivational possibilities to spur the student to attend to his tape is another opportunity for the ingenuity of the teacher.

As a form of external spur to hear the tape to its conclusion is the inclusion of a letter grade at the end of the recorded criticism. This is the only mention of grade

we make in any portion of the process. We find the student does wish an indication of his progress. We attempt to give him an honest appraisal, announcing the grade to him verbally and at the same time explaining how this was arrived at. The strengths and weaknesses of his paper are explained to him along with the statement of evaluation.

Handbook

The closest approach to grammatical instruction is the Handbook for Revision which the investigators compiled and provided for each student. The Handbook is for supplementary use by the student and is not used in the class. The teacher sometimes suggests that the student may find help for a rhetorical problem in a pertinent section of the Handbook.

The Handbook is written in a style which tends to bridge the gap between the grammar with which the student might be familiar and the approach employed in this method. The following excerpt from the chapter on punctuation might serve to exemplify the tenor of the book.

> "The difficulty arises when you try to determine whether a modifier is restrictive or nonrestrictive. There is no clear rule. Very often the modifier is restrictive or nonrestrictive, depending upon what the writer intends to say. Consider the following sentences:
>
> All the boys who are in the front row are going to the ball game.
>
> All the boys, who are in the front row, are going to the ball game.
>
> In the first of these sentences, only those boys who are in the first row are going to go to the ball game. The poor slobs who are in the other rows are going to be kept behind. In the second sentence, all the boys are in the front row. In the second sentence, there are no poor slobs in the other rows."

No mention of terms like "modifier," "restrictive," "nonrestrictive" is ever made other than on the page of this Handbook. If the student has prior knowledge of these concepts he can recognize this and make use of it. If he does not, he need not concern himself with it. As can be seen, the discussion immediately shifts to the thought being conveyed. The punctuation problem can be handled equally well on the basis of clarity of expression as it can on the basis of types of clauses.

The informal, irreverent approach is encouraged through employment of words like "slobs" in the above discussion. Another method we have used can be seen in this introduction to the chapter titled "Using a Dictionary."

> "If you are a fairly normal person, you--like your instructors--have difficulty with spelling. There are a number of reasons for your inadequacy and ours, not the least of which is the fact that spoken English has at least twelve vowel sounds (not including diphthongs) and only five written vowel symbols (a,e,i,o,u)."

The discussion continues with a cataloging of linguistic difficulties which all people experience. This is a further attempt to shift some of the blame from the student to the language; to point out to him that all people, including the too often pedestalled English teacher, share the problems; to try to convince him that his difficulties are not all "his fault." The solution to the language problems then becomes an effort to overcome the inadequacies of the language as much as the shortcomings of the student.

The Teacher

As in no other area of instruction can the teacher be more instrumental in the students not learning than in remedial English. The student comes with his history of failure, to an unpopular compulsory subject, teetering on the brink of being "turned-off" once again. The prime duty of the teacher is to see that this does not occur. For if it does, if the student "gives up," no method can succeed.

The teacher is the integral figure on whom the success of this entire method depends. Without effective teacher performance neither the classroom aids, nor the classroom revisions, nor the tape recorder grading can bring about improvement in student writing.

Consider the following illustrative sentences from the Handbook.

> Don Meredith, the great Dallas Cowboy signal caller, threw three touchdown passes within five minutes yesterday.
>
> Dracula, dressed in a Nehru jacket and love beads, drank a pint of blood.

The inept and ghastly Arabella Fermor lost her dime-store engagement ring.

Unless the instructor is willing to move his attitude concerning language somehow in this direction, this method won't work. This is not to say he must necessarily be conversant with football, or compose sentences with ridiculous components. But he must somehow be prepared to approach the culture of the students, to laugh with them at the vagaries of the study we call English, and to explore honestly the communication processes. He had better abandon sacrosanct ideas of correctness, not be offended at assaults at the hallowed regions of his culture, and not feel in any way impinged or compromised at having to delve into the most elemental aspects of composition.

If the teacher feels he cannot adopt this point of view perhaps he should stay out of the remedial writing classroom where his effectiveness will be at best minimal. The investigators feel that teacher attitude is of paramount importance in the success of this method.

TABLE 3

CLASS SIZE, TIME OF CLASSES, NUMBER OF WITHDRAWALS
1968 FALL SESSION

Experimental	Class Size *	Time	Number Dropped
Sec. 1	27	8:30 MWF	1
Sec. 2	25	9:30 MWF	0
Sec. 4	21	12:30 MWF	2
Sec. 5	23	1:30 MWF	5
Totals	96		8
Control			
Sec. 3	18	11:30 MWF	4
Sec. 6	24	2:30 MWF	7
Sec. 7	14	3:30 MWF	4
Totals	56		15

*These figures include only those students who actually began the program and do not include those students who pre-registered and did not attend one class meeting.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Tests

The investigators agree with the statement of John C. Sherwood in The Sixth Mental Measurements Yearbook who says: "No 'objective' test measures the ability to write; it tests certain critical powers which are related to the ability to write" (5). Because of this belief two tests were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the method.

In an attempt to evaluate the writing ability of the students a "blank paper" test was administered to both the experimental and control groups on the first and last class meetings of the course. The investigators prepared graded writing samples (A through F) together with a set of criteria for each level (see appendix III). The four sets of writing samples (pre and post tests for experimental and control groups) were mixed into a random arrangement and, after each was given a code number in lieu of a name, were sent to a group of evaluators at another university to be graded according to the criteria and writing samples drawn up by the investigators.

In addition to the above procedure both groups were also tested at the beginning and the end of the course with an objective test, the "Cooperative English Test." This test was administered and scored by the investigators with aid of the counselors of the College. Both the English Expression and the Reading Comprehension portions of the test was given.

Analysis

"Blank Paper" Tests

The results of the evaluation of the writing samples are shown in Table No. 4. A comparison of the "C," "D," and "F" grades of the experimental and control groups was effected by the Chi-square analysis method.

$$X^2 = \Sigma \left[\frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe} \right]$$

Question 1: How closely are the experimental and the control students matched on initial grades?

Ho: The experimental group is not significantly different from the control group.

% of Pre-Test Grades in Each Group

Experimental Pre-Test:	C:15	D:43	F:40
Control Pre-Test:	C:19	D:39	F:36

$$X^2 = \sum 1.07 + .37 + .40 = 1.84$$
$$.25 < P \ (1.84)_3 < .50$$

Therefore Ho is accepted. The two groups are matched on initial theme grades.

Question 2: Do grade distributions change after completing the course?

Ho: The grade distribution at the end of treatment for the experimental group is not significantly different than at the beginning.

Number of Grades in Pre and Post Test of the Experimental Group

Experimental Pre-Test	C:9	D:26	F:24
Experimental Post-Test	C:15	D:31	F:13

$$X^2 = \sum 4 + 1 + 5.04 = 10.04$$
$$.01 < P \ (10.04)_3 < .02$$

Therefore Ho is rejected. The theme grades for the experimental group do change on the 2 percent level of chance.

Ho: The grade distribution at the end of treatment for the control group is not significantly different than at the beginning.

Number of Grades in Pre and Post Test of the Control Group

Control Pre-Test	C:7	D:14	F:13
Control Post-Test	C:14	D:15	F:6

$$X^2 = \sum 7 + .07 + 3.76 = 10.83$$
$$.01 < P \ (10.83)_3 < .02$$

Therefore Ho is rejected. The theme grades for the control group do change at the 2 percent level of chance.

Question 3: Do experimental students do worse on final themes than the control group?

Ho: The experimental group is not significantly different from the control group?

% of Post-Test Grades in Each Group

Experimental Post-Test:	C:25	D:52	F:22
Control Post-Test:	C:39	D:42	F:17

$$X^2 = \Sigma \; 7.84 + 1.92 + 1.14 = 10.90$$
$$.01 < P\,(10.90)_3 < .02$$

Therefore Ho is accepted. The experimental group does as well as the control group on final themes at the 2 percent level of chance.

The conclusion from this analysis is that the experimental group did as well as the control group in their writing performance. Since the experimental group received no instruction in grammar while the control did receive such instruction, the indication is that grammatical instruction can be eliminated without necessarily hindering the students' improvement in writing.

Analysis Cooperative English Tests

The results of the Cooperative English Tests reveal the following:

1. The students of the experimental and control groups were initially well-matched.

2. No significant change in vocabulary nor in level of comprehension for either group.

3. Both experimental and control groups improved significantly their speed of reading (2% level of chance).

4. Experimental group increased (5% level of chance) in grammar and organization of ideas.

5. Control group increased (10% level of chance) in grammar and organization of ideas.

6. Control group had a tendency (25% level of chance) to become more erratic in their responses.

While this is the best of the standardized objective type tests in the opinion of the investigators, it still has all of the faults inherent in this type of test concerning the validity as an instrument in the measurement of writing ability. Sherwood, following his assertion

mentioned earlier that "no 'objective' test measures the ability to write," states what the test does measure. "It does simulate . . . part of the writing process, the period of proofreading and revision. Any teacher of remedial English knows that some students can become quite proficient in spotting errors in workbook exercises, where they know what they are looking for, without being able to detect the same errors in their own themes . . . . If the Cooperative test cannot test the actual ability to write, it does at least test the ability to evaluate what has been written" (6).

The experimental method attempts to teach students to write. As Sherwood indicates, the test is based to a great extent on competence in the reading process rather than in writing. Reading competence is demanded initially to enable the student to take the test, to work his way knowingly through the questions and possible answers. The ability to recognize errors, the skills associated with proofreading and revision demands competency in reading, not writing. Evaluation of written material is not composition.

The test then, is constructed to measure language competency from an analytical aspect while the experimental approach emphasizes the synthetic processes. Still the experimental group shows an improvement in knowledge of grammar even though they have received no instruction in it as have the students in the control group. The 25% level of chance tendency of the control group toward erratic performance suggests that while the control approach may suit some students, the experimental approach seems better for the entire group of students.

The contrasting drop-out rate in the two groups must also be considered in interpreting the results of both the Cooperative English Tests and the "Blank-paper" test. Of the students beginning the course in the control group, 26% failed to finish the course. In the experimental group 8.3% of the students failed to complete the course. Therefore, more students of all ability levels remained in the experimental courses and took the tests. Assuming that the typical academic situation prevailed in which the unsuccessful student is the one who usually drops a course, the experimental groups then retained a greater portion of the less successful students than did the control groups. The performance of the experimental group must be viewed with this difference in mind.

TABLE 4

Distribution of Grades of the "Blank Paper"(Writing Sample)
Pre and Post Tests

	Experimental Group (60 Students)		Control Group (36 Students)	
	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test
A	0	0	0	0
B	1	1	2	1
C	9	15	7	14
D	26	31	14	15
F	24	13	13	6

Further Conclusions

The difference in the drop-out rate coupled with the statistical analysis necessitates a comment on the attitude manifest in the two groups. The mere fact that the drop rate in the experimental group was one-third of that in the control is indicative of a greater student interest.

While there was no attempt made to evaluate attitude in an organized way in the study other than the drop rate, the teachers attest to the improved spirit of the student as contrasted to other classes which they taught by the traditional methods.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Because this project concerns remedial study, the possibility of applying the methods and principles to grades prior to college entrance is immediately suggested. The very concept of remediation implies a failure of previous experience.

While we have found the method successful for college freshmen, we see no reason why a similar approach might not be used as a remedial method prior to college, particularly in the senior high school. When writing difficulties beset the student of any level, to some degree the problems outlined in this study are present. A fruitful area of further study lies in the application of this approach to secondary and even elementary composition instruction.

While the method can be used with any student, it seems to suggest a possible answer to those students encountering more basic cultural problems. As a method which attempts to pick up the student where the teacher finds him, to build on the student's cultural background, to strip away the false-forboding "front" of language as a cultural barrier, the approach seems to offer possibilities to the teacher of students for whom the traditions "don't work" -- inner city and rural slums, the black ghetto, the foreigner newly arrived.

And if the principles of language instruction are valid, why should the use of them be limited to remedial areas? Perhaps if a more realistically honest approach to language were incorporated into all writing instruction we would have less need for remedial programs such as the one described in this study. Much of what we have found profitable for the remedial student will be desirable for all students. If some of the traditional methods which are perhaps, in part at least, erroneous were corrected, maybe more students could be prevented from finding their way into remedial classes.

SUMMARY

An improvement in college remedial writing is sought by ignoring the traditional grammar to rhetoric approach and attempting a transfer of oral expressive ability to writing. Since the grammatical approach obviously has had little effect on teaching the remedial student to write, a different approach seems imperative.

In this program the student has been exposed to a series of audio-visual stimuli to which he was encouraged to verbalize his reactions. Then he was directed to transfer these verbal reactions to the written word. A series of films, recordings, slides, cartoon transparencies and readings were used as stimuli to communication. The teacher attempted to correct the student's errors in composition by verbalizing the mistakes with the student. The oral-aural correction technique was reinforced by tape recorder grading of themes.

Evaluation of the procedure is based upon a reading of pre and post-test composition samples of the experimental and control groups by an evaluating team at another university. In addition the Cooperative English Test was administered before and after the course.

The results indicate that the students taught by the experimental method learn to write equally as well without grammatical instruction as the students in the control group who were taught by the traditional method.

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APPENDIX I

CLASSROOM AIDS

Slides

Blume, Peter	The Rock
Bruegel, Pieter	Peasant Wedding
" "	Wedding Dance
Dix, Otto	Der Krieg
Duchamp	Bottleneck
Dresser	Teapot
Hopper, Edward	Gas Station
" "	Drug Store
" "	House by Railroad
" "	Women in Window
" "	Street
Harnell	My Gems
Goya	The Disasters of War
Titian	Jealous Husband
Toulouse-Lautrec	At the Bar
Shahn, Ben	Miners' Wives
" "	Passion (Socco & Vonzetti)
Rouault	Tragic Clown
Orozco, Jose	Victims

Transparencies

35 - 40 Cartoon Transparencies

Films

King of the Rocket Men (1st serial episode)
The American in Orbit
The Time of the Horn

Recordings

Pastoral Symphony (Beethoven) - Storm Scene
Moldau
Grand Canyon Suite
Herb Alpert - Bull Ring Sounds and Music
Elgar - Pomp and Circumstance
Kraus - Conflict
Daytona Speedway Sounds
Herbert - March of Toys
British Parade Marches
Edward Murrow - (Spoken narrations)
Pictures at an Exhibition

APPENDIX II

COURSE OUTLINE

The classroom sessions consist mainly of two portions: a thought stimulation period during which the student is exposed to one or more of the motivational aids; a writing session based on the materials to which he has just been exposed. At times the instructor may find it desirable to interject a discussion session to further develop the ideas presented in the stimulus material. It is conceivable that this sequence may at times extend over two or more sessions. But in general the aids have been chosen with the view toward completion of the stimulus-writing sequence in one class period.

The use of classroom time for lecturing or discussion with the entire group concerning writing techniques will be kept to a minimum. This instruction will be carried on during the writing portion of the period during which the instructor will circulate among the students offering aid on an individual basis. This individual instruction is also effected in the grading of the more extensive themes which the students submit periodically and in private office conferences.

Text: Here and Now: An Approach to Writing through Perception, ed. Fred Morgan, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., New York, 1968.

WEEK I

September 16	Introduction. Film: 1st episode of serial film "King of the Rocket Men." Writing exercise on "What happens next?" will be used as initial writing sample for evaluation.
September 18	Description Stevens - p. 11 (Here and Now) Use a pear and another object for writing exercise
September 20	Description Still life print p. 12 Slide of still life

WEEK II

September 23	Description of figures on cards; evaluation of description by drawing figures from descriptions.

September 25 — Recording of tone poems:
- Grand Canyon Suite
- Beethoven's 6th Symphony -- Storm Scene
- Pictures at an Exhibition
- Moldau

For one or two of these write on "What's Going On?"

September 27 — Recording of auto racing motor sounds from Daytona Speedway
Write a description of the action.
Theme I due.

WEEK III

September 30 — Description of persons
- Updike - p. 79; ex. - Basketball Player
- Cartoon transparency

October 2 — Revision of theme I

October 4 — Film - astronaut characteristics
- Glenn's flight

WEEK IV

October 7 — Slides: Hopper - Lonely House by Railroad
- Women in Window

Who lives here? Characteristics

October 9 — Narration:
Write sequels to cartoon transparencies
- e.g. "cat on man's lap"
  "cat in the tree"
- p. 14 -- When man realizes error or when his wife returns.

October 11 — Recording: Parade Marches
Alpert - Bull Fight Music
What's going on? Theme II due.

WEEK V

October 14 — Print -- p. 91 - Money changer and his wife.
Narrate his day.

October 16 — Revision of theme II

October 18 — Cartoon transparencies: Digging grave in front yard
Man in the cove
What happens next?

WEEK VI

October 21 — Recording: Spoken Word
Edward Murrow -- Hear It Now
Complete the story.

October 23 — Personal Experience: Recordings
Kraus -- Conflict
Elgar -- Pomp and Circumstance
What does this mean to you?

October 25 — Theme III -- in class
Writing exercise p. 56 - place description

WEEK VII

October 28 — Prints: p. 65 Van Gogh
p. 41 Rauschenbert
What do these mean to you?

October 30 — Revision of theme III
Assign 1st essay for Friday

November 1 — Updike -- p. 139 A & P
Williams -- p. 145 Tract

WEEK VIII

November 4 — Classification and Division
Slides: Breugel - Peasant Wedding and Wedding Dance
Classify the people in these

November 6 — Print: Grant Wood
Write about the class of people.
Cartoon transparencies of characters outside the painting

November 8 — Class. and Div. and Stereotypes
p. 33 -- Parker "Arrangement in Black and White"
Theme IV due

WEEK IX

November 11 — Comparison and Contrast: p. 82 - cartoon appearances vs. reality

November 13 — Revision of theme IV

November 15 — Slide: Der Krieg
Print: Echo of a Scream
p. 203 -- Agee "Mother's Tale"
Sentimentality vs. real horror

WEEK X	Comparison and contrast of attitudes.
November 18	Recording: March p. 179 - Jarrell -- "Death of the Ball Turret Gunner"
November 20	p. 173 - Kazin -- "The Human Factory" Compare and contrast with your school.
November 22	Film: "Time of the Horn" Analysis
WEEK XI	
November 25	Theme V -- in class Based on E. M. Forster "My Wood"
WEEK XII	
December 2	Develop Idea Logically Print: Government Bureau p. 168 p. 167 - W. H. Auden "The Unknown Citizen"
December 4	Develop Idea Cartoon Transparency
December 6	Theme V revision
WEEK XIII	
December 9	Letter writing: conventions and types
December 11	p. 29 -- Print Demuth Write letter to publisher giving your opinion of this painting Assignment: Mail a letter of application to the instructor
December 13	Develop an idea: Cartoon transparency
WEEK XIV	
December 16	Essays: p. 45 -- E. B. White -- "Second Tree from the Corner" p. 57 -- Bradbury -- "Death of Col. Freeleigh"
December 18	Theme VI - process analysis (in class)
December 20	Cartoon: p. 101 - Heilige Nacht Reaction to it

WEEK XV

January 6	Revision theme VI
January 8	p. 105 - J. Baldwin -- "Sonny's Blues"
January 10	Review
	Obtain writing sample for evaluation.

Examination will consist of a theme.

APPENDIX III

EVALUATION OF SAMPLES

The A paper --

This paragraph is well developed and contains substantial supporting detail, although the conclusion could be firmer. The writer also has varied his sentence patterns, subordinating elements which do not pertain directly to his topic. There are no major mechanical errors and only one misspelled word.

The B paper --

This paragraph is also well developed, but its supporting detail is less vivid than that in the A paragraph. The sentence patterns are somewhat varied, but the variations are not so subtly used as in the A paragraph. There are also some mechanical errors in spelling and capitalization. The conclusion is also somewhat vague and borders on the colloquial.

The C paper --

Development is only fair in this paragraph, and the supporting detail is often vague and generalized. There is little sentence variation, and the style is almost telegraphic. Like many paragraphs which are average, this one has few mechanical errors and many expressions which are trite. The conclusion is inadequate, if indeed there is a conclusion.

The D paper --

Although the writer of this paragraph begins by giving detail related to his topic sentence, he soon wanders and finishes his paragraph on a topic different from the one he started with. The fragment indicates that the writer was not thinking through his assignment. This paragraph also contains a number of mechanical and spelling errors, as well as an over supply of the trite and the colloquial.

The F paper --

This paragraph is ill conceived and constructed. The writer shows little, if any, awareness of standard English sentence patterns. The paragraph abounds in errors of spelling and mechanics. There is no attempt at concrete detail, and those few sentences that can be comprehended are nothing more than vague generalizations.

Today's Musical Groups -- A

Many of today's rock 'n roll groups are unconventional in their physical appearance. The Orange Sherbert, a group of five teen-aged boys, uses bright colors and "mod" clothes to achieve a shocking effect that complements their ear-shattering music. Each of the boys has dyed his hair yellow, although many adults believe that the boys are really wearing wigs. Regardless of whether the yellow hair is theirs, the clothes they wear are undoubtedly authentic. Their suits, which are a bright kelly green with large, circular orange buttons, snuggle against their bodies as if the material had been sprayed on with some miraculous aresol wonder. Under the psychedelic lights which play over the boys during each performance, their faces become a ghastly green, due probably to their bright green suits and yellow hair.

Today's Musical Groups -- B

Today's musical groups are quite unconventional in their physical appearance. Only recently, the six sophomores prided themselves on their crew cuts and their bright red blazers. In sharp contrast, the Orange Sherbert looks as if its members were assembled from each of the five continents. Their only similarity is their hair, which each boy has dyed a bright yellow. They really look as if they were refugees from the war on poverty. The groups clothes are distinguished by colorful patches which are sewed on in random fashion with observable sticthes. The boys ties are very wide and are either striped or polka-dotted. They are certainly a far cry from the groups of a few years ago.

Today's Musical Groups -- C

The musical groups of this time and age are quite unconventional in their appearance. Just a few years back, everybody in a group dressed alike, but not now. The Orange Sherbert is a good example. One of them dresses like George Washington, another like Tom Jones, and another Al Capone. The one thing they do have in common is their long hair, but they do wear it in different styles. There's the long beach boy hair do, the flip, and the pigtail.

Today's Musical Groups -- D

Many of todays rock and roll groups are pretty unconventional in their physical appearance. Each of the members of the Orange Sherbert have died their hair yellow. Which makes them look strange. There unorthodosy appeals to modern teen age tastes. The teen agers in this modern world of today really dig any thing that is wierd or unusual. They are rebeling against a conventional society that makes fun of them.

Today's Musical Groups -- F

Many of todays rock and roll groupes are pretty unconvenshunal in there physical appearance the Orange sherbert is an unconvenshunal appearing groupe which died their hare yellow in order to make itself look like nobody else looks like in this modern world today which we live in and which the teen agers are rebeling against. Because it's so convenshunal. Todays modern teen ager really dig everything which doesnt apeal to the older generation which makes fun of them.